

Menu



- [Performances for Adults](#)
- [Schools](#)
- [Children's & Family Concerts](#)

- [row](#)
 - [About](#)
 - [Calendar](#)
 - [Booking Info](#)
 - [Free Resources](#)
 - [Advice Blog](#)

- [row](#)
 - [Schools – Visits](#)
 - [Schools – Online Concerts](#)
 - [Video on Demand](#)

- [row](#)
 - [Performances for Adults](#)
 - [Children's & Family Concerts](#)
 - [Store](#)

March 16, 2018

Grant Funding For Performances and Lectures

This is a frequently-updated resource list and idea generator for those who'd love to be bringing more programming to their visitors/members/patrons/community.

(Last updated March 2018)

Grant Funding for Public Programming

I've been making my full time living [as a performer](#) for the last twenty-six years, and while I haven't done a scientific study on this, I'd have to say that the vast majority of my engagements – as many as 300 per year – have been funded, in one way or another, through outside granting sources.



Photo by Greg Meadows

For me, so much of the educational performing that I like to do is ideally suited for organizations that seem to have the least amount of resources to devote to it!

Historical societies, libraries, museums, cultural organizations; money is tight for all of these institutions, and while programming is an important piece of their missions, it's rarely their most pressing concern when it comes time to allocate scarce funds.

Individual Performers Can Rarely Apply for Grants

There are few if any programming grants out there that individual speakers and performers can apply for, and without a somewhat complicated fiscal sponsorship arrangement with a 501c3 organization, I'm afraid that artists and performers will not be showing up on your doorstep with a fully-funded program to offer you.

(For those who have been with me for some time, you may recall the days when I *was* able to come to you “fully funded,” first as a “Speaker in the Humanities” for the [New York Council for the Humanities](#) [NYCH], and then as a [Public Scholar](#) for that same organization. That wonderful twelve-year run has sadly come to an end with the dissolving of those programs.)

Your Not-for-Profit CAN Apply for Grants!

If your organization has 501c3 status, there are a range of grant opportunities available to you to cover some, or all, of the costs of putting on a program or a series of talks and performances.

Sometimes, you are expected to come up with a 50/50 (1-to-1) match, but often your portion can be contributed “in-kind” through dedicating staff time (like yours, to write the grant), time and resources to [advertise and promote the event](#), office and performance space, volunteer time, etc.

Help with Grant Applications



The application process can vary widely, from a single page of questions to far longer and more involved forms.

However, my experience has always been that there are helpful people on the other end of those forms who really would love to see you submit a successful application, so don't hesitate to reach out and use them as a resource.

The funds are there to support organizations just like yours, and the grant administrator wants to help you do this!

I am also more than happy to help, whether you're including my performances and workshops in your grant application or not. I have been involved in the conception and writing of many successful grants over the years, so please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have questions or need some encouragement.

SPECIAL NOTE – Each of these opportunities is available nationwide, in one form or another. Because much of my own work takes place within the state of New York, I've also included some NY-specific information – just look for the “**In NY**” tag.

Some Ideas – How to Fund a Performance Series

While by no means exhaustive, the following list should be a great jumping off point for you.

If you have other resources to share, or you find a link here that's no longer working, I'd really love to hear about that in the comments section below.

#1. Quick Start

[Google](#) is your friend. Simply type “(Your location) arts grants,” or “(Your location) grants for presenters” into the search box and you'll be off and running.

(A “presenter” is an organization that puts on, or “presents,” events and programs for the public – – that would be you!)

#2. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

The [National Endowment for the Arts](#) offers funding in amounts from \$10,000 (for projects to “extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations”) to \$200,000 for more involved place-based partnerships between [arts organizations](#), non-profits and government agencies, and there are many layers in between.

Art Works

One NEA category to pay particular attention to is the [Art Works program](#), which offers \$10,000-100,000 grants for arts-based projects across fourteen different disciplines and types of venue.

There are two application deadlines per year per discipline, based on the exact focus of the project.

You’ll need to have, as a minimum, a three-year history of programming, along with a 1-to-1 match of funds, in order to apply, although your matching funds can be “in kind” (staff time, office space, etc). Here’s are a few of the Art Works categories that might apply to you:

- [For a series of music programs](#)
- [For a series of programs involving at least two arts disciplines](#) (music, visual art, dance, etc)
- [Strictly for museums](#)

Challenge America Grants

If you’re a first-time applicant to the NEA and your program series will reach underserved populations, the \$10,000 [Challenge America grants](#) can be a great place to start, according to Division Coordinator Maryrose Flanigan, whom I heard very recently when she spoke in Buffalo.

If the NEA granting programs end up being a bit too large for the project you have in mind, they will likely direct you to your state arts council (see #4.).

#3. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)



I would recommend browsing all of the grant categories at the [NEH's website](#), as there may be several different ones your project could fall under.

You might also get some great new ideas based on some of the different opportunities and project descriptions listed there.

Additionally, I would suggest having a good look at the [Public Humanities Projects category](#), which supports “projects that bring the ideas and insights of the humanities to life for general audiences.”

#4. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

With an annual budget larger than that of the NEA or the NEH, and grantmaking as their primary activity, the [IMLS](#) should be very high on your list when seeking programming support for your museum or library (or historical society – more on that in a minute).

And, according to Connie Bodner, Supervisory Grants Management Specialist, they also welcome applications from other cultural organizations that wish to partner with a museum or library.

Here's [a general listing of all grant categories](#) sorted by type of institution.

For Museums

Defined very broadly as aquariums, arboretums, art museums, botanical gardens, children's museums, historic houses/sites, history museums, natural history/anthropology museums, nature centers, planetariums, science/technology centers, specialized museums and zoological parks, museums have opportunities for five different grant types through the IMLS.

The most popular is the [Museums for America](#) category, which offers \$5,000-25,000 grants with **no matching funds requirement**, and larger amounts with a 1-to-1 match.

These grants can be used for planning a program series and for the programming itself, among many other things. Deadline is December 1 each year.

For Historical Societies

If you have one full-time or full-time-equivalent employee (paid or unpaid) and a publicly-accessible collection that you care for (available to the public at least 120 days of the year), you will very likely qualify as a museum under the IMLS guidelines, according to Connie Bodner.

For Libraries

The IMLS's largest grant program is the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) [Grants to States Program](#). Through this program, IMLS transfers funds to State Library Administrative Agencies using a population-based formula (bigger states get larger amounts of funds).

Here's a chart of [allotments by state over the past five years](#).

Each State Library Administrative Agency creates a five-year plan which outlines the goals and objectives for these funds, and these include programs of various kinds for libraries of all kinds within the state (not just public).

[This page](#) will allow you to find your state's contact person along with a website link to explore the state-specific goals and objectives for the funds.

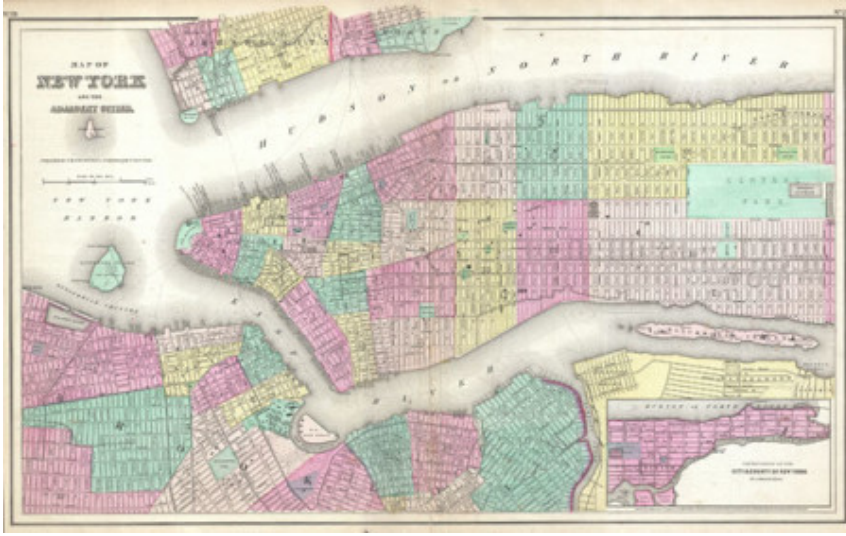
In NY: New York State's five-year plan is [here](#), and the highlights are described [here](#).

#5. State Arts Councils

Do an online search for "(Your State Name) Arts Council", or consult [the list of state arts councils available here](#).

Once you've found your statewide arts organization's name and website, just navigate to their "Grants" or "Funding Opportunities" section, and drill down further until you've found a granting category for "Presenters," "Public Programs," "Community Events," etc.

There will always be a contact person listed on the website to help you at every step with questions about grant categories, deadlines, etc.



In NY: The [New York State Council on the Arts](#) (NYSCA) provides significant funding for larger arts-based projects, and also “State and Local Partnerships” as administered through regional arts organizations throughout the state. It is this local funding category that would be a great starting point if you have not applied to NYSCA in recent years. The Decentralization (DEC) grants have been used successfully by hundreds of small organizations to present a series of programs for the public.

- [General primer on NYSCA grants](#)
- [State and Local Partnerships \(including DEC grants\)](#)

Two other NYSCA categories to take a close look at are the [Presenting grants](#) and the [Special Arts Services grants](#).

#6. State Humanities Councils

Often overlooked, statewide humanities organizations are wonderful drivers of conversations, lectures, performances and projects addressing the “why” of our past, present and future.

(Elbrun Kimmelman, a former Chairman of the Board of the New York Council for the Humanities, told me once that she thinks of the arts as the “what,” to the “why” of the humanities.)

[Find your state’s humanities organization\(s\)](#), navigate to their “Grants” or “Funding Opportunities” section, and drill down further until you’ve found a granting category for “Presenters” (that’s you!), “Public Programs,” “Community Events,” etc.

Similar to statewide arts councils, there will always be a contact person listed on the website to help you along the way with questions about grant categories, deadlines, etc.

Many state humanities councils also have a “Speakers Bureau” or program in place that allows your organization to choose from dozens of fully-



funded speakers and talks.

In NY: Humanities New York’s (HNY) [Action Grants](#) provide up to \$5,000 to help launch a series of public programs. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, and must be received at least 3 months prior to the start of programming.

#7. Regional Arts Organizations

Most regions of the country have their own multi-state arts organizations. These can be great resources for funding as well as for discovering granting opportunities available in your local area and networking with other presenters. You’ll find [a listing of regional arts organizations here](#).

In NY: [Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation](#)

#8. Community Foundations

Every state seems to have Community Foundation organizations, which are designed to pool resources from individuals, businesses and foundations to provide grants for the betterment of the community.

Some states have regional community foundations under the umbrella of the state foundation. In fact, according to Wikipedia, there are over 700 Community Foundations in the United States!

Just type “Community Foundation of (your region or state name)” into a search engine and you’ll be on your way.

#9. Americans for the Arts

Look for your state [in the sidebar here](#), where you’ll find news, statistics regarding funding and links to potential grant sources for programming.

#10. United Arts Funds

According to the [Americans for the Arts](#) website, United Arts Funds (UAFs) are local arts agencies whose main function is to raise money from local individuals, businesses, and foundations to provide support to the cultural community.

There's [an interactive map on this page](#) to help find the UAF closest to you.

#11. The Foundation Directory from The Foundation Center

[This directory](#) is nothing short of a clearinghouse of granting organizations and opportunities sorted by geographic location, types of projects supported, etc. For each granting entity, it provides application information, past projects supported, staff member names, and numerous other data points.

Search Grantmakers

Grantmaker Name
view index

EIN

Grantmaker Location
More location optionsFields of Interest
view indexTypes of Support
view indexGeographic Focus
view indexTrustees, Officers,
and Donors
view indexType of Grantmaker
view index

Total Giving ▾

From:

To:

SEE HOW MUCH
INFORMATION WE'VE

PACKED

INTO
FOUNDATION DIRECTORY
ONLINEChoose from three plan levels
to get exactly what you need.UPGRADE
NOW

You can get started by registering for a free account.

Then, type your city or town name into the “Grantmaker Location” field, and this should give you an immediate sense of the breadth of opportunities out there in your community.

You would need to purchase a membership in order to access all of the layers contained here (*unless* your public library has a subscription, which *they might!*), but this initial free search is a great launching point, and for self-starters with some time on their hands, each grantmaker could then be researched separately.

For those who do a fair amount of programming, I'd highly recommend that you consider a paid subscription to this resource.

#12. Grants.gov

On the [“Search Grants” page](#) at [Grants.gov](#), try checking the “Humanities” and “Arts” boxes under “Categories.”

#13. Miscellaneous

In NY: I don’t know much about them, but I stumbled across the [NY Funders Alliance website](#) while doing some research for this article – – looks very promising.

Thanks to the Grantmakers!

Over the years, grant (and other) funds have enabled me to perform for each of the following not-for-profit organizations and events; multiple times, in many cases! (All locations are NY unless otherwise noted.)

1891 Fredonia Opera House, 6 on the Square, Adirondack Folk Festival, Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts, Adirondack Museum, Albany History Fair, Alexander Findley Library, All Arts Matter, Almanzo Wilder Homestead, Amherst Museum, Andes Public Library, Andes Society for History and Culture, Applefest (Franklin PA), Arts Council for Chautauqua County, Attica Historical Society, Babylon Public Library, Baldwinsville Public Library, Barneveld Free Library, Belfast Town Hall, Bergen Historical Society, Bergen Park Festival, Blockhouse Museum for Stillwater Free Library, Blues and Jazz Festival (Erie PA), Boom Days at Silo City, Brentwood Public Library, Brewster Public Library, Bright Hill Literary Center, Brighton Memorial Library, Bristol Valley Theater, Brooklyn Daughters of the American Revolution, Buffalo Friends of Folk Music, Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo Lighthouse Festival, Buffalo Maritime Festival, Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo Naval Park, Byron Bergen Public Library, Byron Memorial Day Festival, Caffè Lena, Canalside Buffalo, Canastota Public Library, Cannon Free Library, Cape Vincent Chamber of Commerce, Cape Vincent Historical Weekend, Carlisle Historical Society, Cattaraugus County Senior Forum, Cayuga Museum, Cayuga-Owasco Lakes Historical Society, Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County, Chapman Historical Museum, Chautauqua County Historical Society, Chenango Arts Council, Chenango County Historical Society, Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country, Chili Public Library, Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum, City of Tonawanda Public Library, Clarence Historical Society, Clayton Opera House, Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library, Cobleskill Partnership Inc at SUNY Cobleskill, Cooperstown Concert Series, Cooperstown Village Library, Cornell Child Care Center, Cornell Folk Song Society, Cornell Plantations, Corning Museum of Glass, Cortland Area Child Care Council, Crosskeys Folk Club (Uppermill Oldham, England), Cuba Circulating Library, Cycle Adirondacks, Dance Flurry, David A Howe Public Library, Delaware County Historical Association, Delevan-Yorkshire Public Library, Deposit Free Library, Dodge Pratt Northam Art & Community Center, Dunham Public Library, Dunkirk Free Library, Dunkirk Lighthouse, Eagle Free Library, Earlville Opera House, East Bloomfield Historical Society, East Meadow Public Library, Eden Public Library, Edith B Ford Memorial Library, Edwards Opera House, Eisteddfod Folk Festival, Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts, Erie Art Museum Blues & Jazz Fest (Erie PA), Erie Canal Museum, Esperance Historical Society, Even Start Family Night, Explore & More Kids Museum, Fabius Historical Society, Fairport Public Library, Fenton History Center, Fillmore Park Pavilion for Wide Awake Club, First Night



Perry, First Presbyterian Church Concert Series, Folk at the Royal Oak (Lewes, England), Folk in Fredonia Concert Series, Folk Music Society of New York, Forest Lawn Cemetery, Foresters Folk Club (Coatham Mundeville, England), Fort Edward Free Library, Fort Plain Museum, Four County Library System, Fourth Lake Community, Frank J Basloe Library, Fred & Harriett Taylor Memorial Library, Friends of Music at Holy Trinity (Greenville PA), Fulton County Historical Society, Gates Summer Concert Series, Geneva Historical Society, Geneva Public Library, George F Johnson Memorial Library, Goff Nelson Public Library, Gouverneur Public Library, Grand Island Historical Society, Great Lakes Experience Festival, Greece Historical Society, Greenwood Furnace Folk Gathering (Huntingdon County PA), Guernsey Memorial Library, Guilderland Public Library, Hamilton Public Library, Hanford Mills Museum, Harris Memorial Library, Hazard Library, Heritage Folk Music, Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum, Historic Beth Joseph Synagogue, Historic Nellis Tavern, Historic Palmyra, Historical Association of Lewiston, Historical Society of Moreau and South Glens Falls, Historical Society of the Tonawandas, History Center of Tompkins County, Homer Center for the Arts, Homestead Event Center, Hornell Public Library, Howard Public Library, Hudson River Museum, Hudson Shores Park, Hull House, Ilion Free Library, Inlet Fall Festival, Irish American Heritage Museum, James Prendergast Library, Jamestown Community College Olean Campus, Julia L Butterfield Memorial Library, Kallet Civic Center, Kent Public Library, Kinderhook Memorial Library, Kirkby Fleetham Folk Club (Northallerton, England), Kirkland Town Library, Lake Placid Center for the Arts, Lakewood Memorial Library, Lamont Memorial Free Library, Lang Memorial Library, Lansing Community Library, Lansing Harbor Festival, Learn About Letchworth Series, Lee-Whedon Memorial Library, Letchworth State Park, Lewis County Historical Society, Lima Public Library, Liverpool Public Library, Lockport Public Library, Mabee Farm State Historic Site, Macedon Public Library, Madison County Historical Society, Madison-Cortland ARC, Malone Riverfest, Marcellus Free Library, Mayfield Historical Society, Mechanicville District Public Library, Medina Canal Heritage Day, Medina Historical Society, Mendon Public Library, Middleburgh Library, Middleport Free Library, Mill Race Festival of Traditional Music (Ontario Canada), Mill Race Folk Society (Ontario Canada), Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts, Mohawk Valley Institute for Learning in Retirement, Montauk Public Library, Montezuma Historical Society, Moore Memorial Library, Morgan Opera House, Morristown Gateway Museum, Music at the Marcy Concert Series, Music on the Delaware, Mystic Sea Music Festival, Nancy Howe Auditorium, Neversink Valley Area Museum, New Berlin Art Forum, New Berlin Library, New Hartford Public Library, New York Geographic Alliance, New York State Fair, New York State Historical Association, New York State Museum, New York State Organization of the DAR State Conference, New York State Scenic Byways Program, Newark Arcadia Historical Society, Niagara Falls Community Fair, Niagara Falls Friends of Local History, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niawanda Park Concert Series, North Tonawanda History Museum, Norwood Village Green Concert Series, Ogdensburg Public Library, Old Brutus Historical Society, Old Songs Festival, Old Stone Fort Museum, Olean Public Library, Olive Free Library, Oneida County Historical Society, Oneida Public Library, Oneonta Family Ties Program, Onondaga County Public Library, Ontario Council of Folk Festivals (Ontario Canada), Ontario County Historical Society, Orchard Park Historical Society, Otego Historical Society, Palmer Museum of Art at Penn State University (University Park PA), Patterson Inn Museum, Pember Library, Penfield Community Center Lecture Series, Penn Yan Concerts in the Park, Penn Yan Public Library, Perry Festival Plaza, Peru Free Library, Petit Branch Library, Phelps Community Historical Society, Phoenix Public Library, Plattsburgh Public Library, Port Washington Public Library, Pottery

Barn Kids, Prattsburg Free Library, Researching New York Conference, Richmond Memorial Library, Roberson Museum & Science Center, Rome Free Academy, Rouses Point Dodge Memorial Library, Roxbury Arts Group, Roycroft Campus, Roycroft Conference Elderhostel, Rushford Free Library, Russell Park Summer Series, Ryedale Museum (North Yorkshire, England), Sacandaga Valley Arts Network, Sackets Harbor Battlefield, Sackets Harbor Concerts on the Waterfront, Sand Lake Center for the Arts, Saratoga National Historical Park, Saratoga Springs Public Library, Sardinia Historical Society, Saugerties Historical Society, Schenectady County Historical Society, Schlow Library (State College PA), Schoharie County Historical Society, Seneca Museum, Seward House Museum, Seymour Public Library, Sherrill-Kenwood Free Library, Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs, Sodus Bay Historical Society, Southeast Steuben County Library, Spencer Library, Spencerport Canal Days Festival, Spencerport Depot and Canal Museum, Springville Center for the Arts, Springville Dairy Festival, Square Chapel Centre for the Arts (Halifax, England), Steele Memorial Library, Stephentown Historical Society, Stevens Memorial Community Library, Strong Memorial Library, Strong National Museum of Play, SUNY Plattsburgh, SUNY Potsdam, Swan Library, Swindon Folk Club (Swindon, England), Symphony Space, Terwilliger Museum, The Deane Center (Wellsboro PA), The Discovery Center of the Southern Tier, The Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library, The Ruins at Canalside, The Stage Western New York Performance Center, Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site, Ticonderoga Festival Guild, Ticonderoga Historical Society and Heritage Museum, Town of Amherst Recreation Department, Town of Brighton Sunset Serenades, Town of Collins Public Library, Town of Colton Summer Music Series, Town of Gainesville Public Library, Town of Gates Recreation, Traditional Arts in Upstate New York, Turtle Hill Folk Festival, Ulysses Philomathic Library, Unity Hall, University at Buffalo Music Department, Utica Public Library, Valley Folk, View Arts Center, Villa Maria College, Village of Angelica/Angelica Booster, Village of Jordan Erie Canal Celebration, Wadsworth Library, War of 1812 Museum, Ward O'Hara Museum, Warsaw Public Library, Washington County Historical Society, Waterford Maritime Historical Society, Waterford Tugboat Roundup, Waterloo Historical Society, Waterloo Memorial Day Celebration, Watkins Glen Public Library, Watson Homestead, Wave Hill, Wead Library, Weedsport Free Library, Wellsville Creative Arts Center, Western New York Arts Conference, Western Town Library, Westfield Lincoln Festival, Williamson-Pultneyville Historical Society, Wilmington Historical Society, Wilson Historical Society, Wimodaughsian Library, Women's Rights National Historical Park, Wood Library, Wood Theater, Woodward Memorial Library, Wyoming County Arts Council, Yates Community Library, Yates County Arts Center, Youngstown Folk Festival, Youngstown Free Library, YWCAs in Cortland County

I'd Love Your Comments, Additions, and Corrections

As mentioned at the start of the article, I'll be keeping this post updated regularly with new opportunities, corrections, updates to broken links and more. Please leave me a comment below!

Share this

◀ 6

◀ 18

Please Post Your Comments

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Your Comments

Let us know what you have to say:

Your Name*

Your Name *

your-real-email@example.com (will not be published) Your Email *

☐ Notify me of followup comments via e-mail. You can also [subscribe](#) without commenting.

Post Comment

2 Responses to Grant Funding For Performances and Lectures

1. *Shane Thomas*

[August 4, 2017 at 3:30 pm](#)

Thanks for compiling all these resources for us Dave. This gives us a blueprint of where to look.

I also liked how you listed all of those that gave you opportunities over the years. This gives a sense of what is out there and the various organizations that we can collaborate with.

[Reply](#)

2. *Elvin Watkins*

[August 2, 2016 at 1:49 pm](#)

please call me 240-727-1858 Elvin Watkins,
I need to speak with you briefly. ..

[Reply](#)

View Posts By Category

- [For Educators](#)
- [For Presenters](#)
- [Just For Fun](#)
- [NY Music & History](#)

Related Posts:

- [The Event Promotion Tip You May Be Overlooking](#)

Get Dave's News, Discounts, and More

[Join Dave's Mailing List](#)

Close

Your Contact Information

*Required Fields

I'm interested in the following (check all that apply)*

- ☐ Possibly booking Dave for an in-person visit at some point ☐ Possibly booking an online concert or distance learning program at some point
- ☐ Subscribing to Blog for Performers ☐ Finding out about future performances for adults in my area
- ☐ Finding out about future performances for kids/families in my area

Additional Message to Dave

Captcha

4 F J 9

A CAPTCHA is a program that protects websites against SPAM by generating tests that humans can pass but malicious computer programs cannot.

[Join Mailing List >](#)

© 2018 Dave Ruch | [Privacy Policy](#) | Site Design by [Renoun Creative](#)

155 St. James Place | Buffalo, NY 14222

- [Media and Press Kits](#)

Quick Contact

Have questions or looking for booking information? Call Dave at 716-884-6855, or send him a message below.

9/26/2018

Grant Funding For Performances and Lectures - Dave Ruch

Message

*Required

Send >